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TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: P - Mr. Tarnoff
FROM: AF - George E. Moose
SUBJECT: New Human Rights Abuses in Rwanda

SUMMARY

A UNHCR investigative team that spent July and August in Rwanda has reported systematic human rights abuses by GOR forces -- including systematic killings -- in the south and southeast of the country. The team has concluded that the GOR is aware of these reprisals against Hutu civilians and may have sanctioned them. A U.N. delegation now in Kigali will raise this issue with the GOR and ask what steps will be taken to halt the abuse. The UN/UNHCR plan public release of the report this week, and we plan to raise this issue with the GOR in the context of the September 20-23 Wirth visit to Kigali.

DISCUSSION

The September 17 debriefing of members of a UNHCR team that spent July and August in Rwanda revealed that the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the military wing of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), has engaged in a pattern of systematic killing of Hutu civilians in the south and southeast of Rwanda. The UNHCR team witnessed Hutu men with arms bound in the company of RPA troops and Tutsi civilians. The soldiers possessed two-way radios and knew the "party-line", indicating that their activities were not unknown to authorities in Kigali.

On the basis of interviews with Hutu refugees, the UNHCR team concluded that the following patterns had emerged. The RPA convened meetings of displaced persons to discuss peace and security. Once the displaced persons were assembled, RPA soldiers moved in and killed them. In addition to these

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massacres, the RPA engaged in house to house sweeps and hunted down individuals hiding in swamps. Victims were usually killed with hoes, axes, machetes and fire. Although males aged 18-40 were at highest risk, sometimes the young and elderly were also killed. The team estimated that the RPA and Tutsi civilian surrogates had killed 10,000 or more Hutu civilians per month, with the RPA accounting for 95% of the killing.

The UNHCR team concluded that the purpose of the killing was a campaign of ethnic cleansing intended to clear certain areas in the south of Rwanda for Tutsi habitation. The killings also served to reduce the population of Hutu males and discouraged refugees from returning to claim their lands.

The UNHCR team informed us that they will raise their finding with GOR Defence Minister Paul Kagame in Kigali, possibly by September 19. They will inquire of Kagame what steps he will take to stop the killings. UNSYG Boutros Ghali plans to brief the Security Council and subsequently make the gist of the UNHCR report public. One of the team leaders asked us not to publicize this until after the Kagame meeting.

We intend to take complementary action. We will use Undersecretary Wirth's September 22-23 meetings with Kagame and other senior GOR officials to raise this issue and to underline US commitment to respect for human rights and the rule of law. We will report further on this issue following the GOR response.

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Drafted:AF/C:REWhitehead
SECC 5044

Cleared:AF/C:ARender

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